

# The internalized transphobia: a literature review

## Abstract

The trans population is one of the sectors that suffer more emotional disorders. Consequently, the percentage of suicide attempts is up to 35.4% higher than the general population. Given the seriousness of the data and the need to take urgent measures to improve their quality of life, the aim of this study is to analyze and compile the information studied about one of the most influential factors in the emotional well-being of trans people: the internalized transphobia. It is defined as the feelings of discomfort or rejection felt by these people when their gender identity does not coincide with the assigned gender, as a result of the internalization of normative gender expectations. To this end, firstly, a literature review was carried out in which the databases PubMed, PsycArticles and Scopus were consulted, as well as the following specialized journals: Transgender Health and LGTB Health. Those articles that did not present keywords such as "trans", "internalized stigma" or "transphobia" in the title or abstract, had not been published in the last 5 years and/or were not exploratory in nature were excluded; finally selecting a total of 10 articles. The analyzed studies, which were mainly based on Meyer's Minority Stress Model, found that internalized transphobia is the stressor that explains to a greater extent the psychological well-being of trans people; and that, in addition, the latter was significantly related to variables such as self-esteem, social connectedness or depressive symptoms. These results demonstrate the importance of this construct, internalized transphobia, in the present and future approach to trans people's well-being. However, given the limited research and the recent start of it, there is a lot of work to be done.

**Keywords:** Trans, internalized stigma, stigma, Minority Stress Model, SDG10.

## Resumen

Las personas trans constituyen uno de los colectivos que más trastornos emocionales sufre. Consecuentemente, el porcentaje de intentos de suicidio es hasta un 35,4% mayor que la población general. Dada la gravedad de los datos y la necesidad de tomar medidas urgentes que mejoren su calidad de vida, el objetivo del presente estudio es analizar y recopilar la información estudiada acerca de uno de los factores más influyentes en el bienestar emocional de las personas trans: la transfobia internalizada. Se define como sentimientos de incomodidad o rechazo que sienten estas personas cuando la identidad de género no coincide con el género asignado, resultado de la internalización de las expectativas normativas de género. Para ello, en primer lugar, se llevó a cabo una revisión de literatura en la que se consultaron las bases de datos PubMed, PsycArticles y Scopus, así como las siguientes revistas especializadas: Transgender Health y LGTB Health. Se excluyeron aquellos artículos que no presentaran en el título o resumen palabras clave como "trans", "internalized stigma" o "transphobia", no hubieran sido publicados en los últimos 5 años y/o no fueran de carácter exploratorio; seleccionando finalmente un total de 10 artículos. Los estudios analizados, que se basaron principalmente en el Modelo de Estrés de las Minorías de Meyer, encontraron que la transfobia internalizada es el factor estresor que explica en mayor medida el bienestar psicológico de las personas trans; y que, a su vez, este último se relacionaba significativamente con variables como la autoestima, la conexión social o la sintomatología depresiva. Estos resultados demuestran la importancia que tiene este constructo, la transfobia internalizada, en el abordaje presente y futuro del bienestar de las personas trans. No obstante, dada la escasa investigación y el reciente inicio de la misma, todavía queda mucho por profundizar.

**Palabras clave:** Trans, transfobia internalizada, estigma, Modelo de Estrés de las Minorías, ODS10.

# The internalized transphobia

## A literature review

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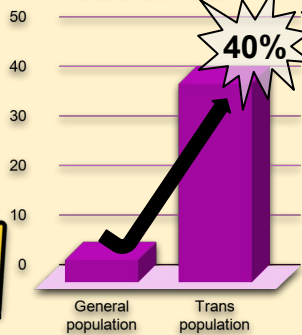
### 1 Introduction

**"Internalized transphobia":** guilt, discomfort, shame, or rejection that a person feels when the gender identity does not match the assigned gender/sex, due to the internalization of normative gender expectations (Bockting et al., 2020; Galupo et al., 2020).



To develop action plans that promote improving of the collective's quality of life consistent with reality, as the Transgender Law, it is necessary to know and investigate the concomitant concepts, such as internalized transphobia.

#### Suicide rate



Suicide attempts trans population account for 40% of the total (James et al., 2016).

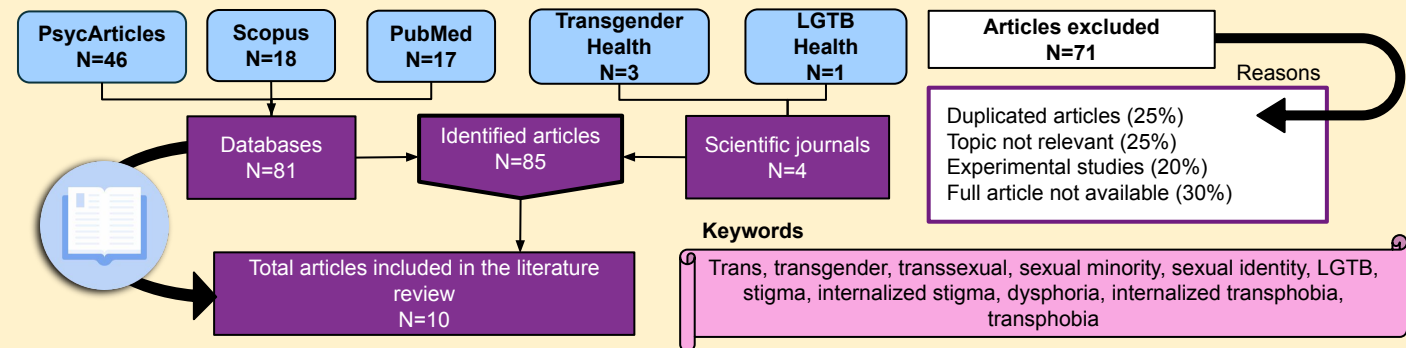
### 2 Objective

Analyze and collect empirical knowledge about internalized transphobia (2015-2021).

The trans population is one of the sectors that suffer more emotional disorders.

### 3 Method

Literature review based on the PRISMA rules.

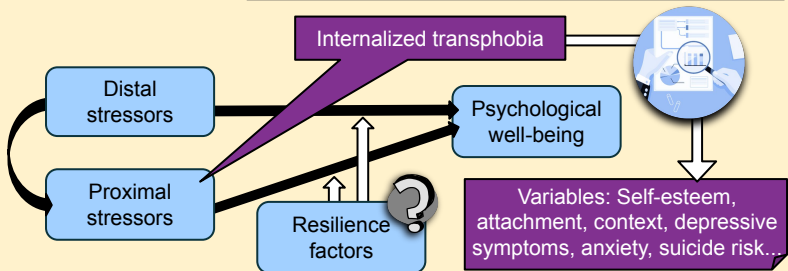


### 4 Results

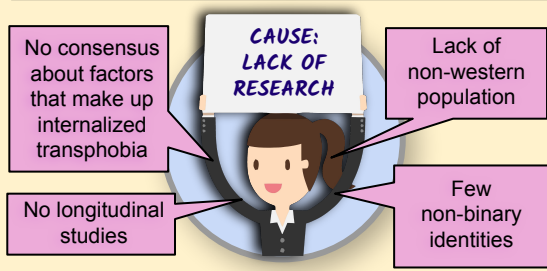
	Sample (n, age)	Instruments	Results
Austin A. et al. (2016)	65, Non-Hispanic White Americans (74%), M= 43	Rosenberg Self-Esteem, Social Connectedness, Shilo's Internalized Homophobia adapted	60% of the sample: moderate levels of internalized transphobia, and high levels: 14%. Internalized transphobia and social connection explain 34% of the variance of self-esteem.
Bockting W. et al. (2020)	S1: 430 american people, M= 37.4, SD=12 S2: 903 american people, M=31.6, SD=11.1	Transgender Identity (TIS), Rosenberg Self-Esteem, Stigma Consciousness adapted	40% of the variance of internalized transphobia was explained by four factors: pride, alienation, passing, and shame.
Galupo M. et al. (2020)	610, american people (83%), white (81.1%), M=26.79, SD=8.71	Online survey about gender identity, demographics, and gender dysphoria experiences	Topics that make up gender dysphoria: external triggers (63.2%), internal processing (53.7%), interruption of social functioning (22.6%) and moderated by the transition (11.1%).
Jäggi T. et al. (2018)	143, swiss people, M=45.2, SD=18.2	Gender Minority Stress and Resilience Measure, and Center of Epidemiologic Studies Depression (CES-D) German version	Internalized transphobia, the most important proximal factor to explain depressive symptoms (r of .42, p <0.01, with ADS-K). Resilience only explained 1% of the variance.
Scandurra C. et al. (2016)	149, italian people, M=33.18, SD=10.96	Center of Epidemiologic Studies Depression (CES-D) Italian version	Descriptive validity of the 4 factors of the TIS confirmed: $\alpha$ of .82 in Alienation, .84 in Pride, .86 in Passing and .89 in Shame.
Tebbe E. et al. (2016)	335, white (81.8%), M=25.21, SD=6.58	Center of Epidemiologic Studies Depression (CES-D) and Internalized Homonegativity (IHS) adapted, Suicidal Behaviors Revised (SBQ-R)	High rates of depression in the sample (68.5%). 71.9% reported having thought about suicide in last year. Significant association with internalized transphobia and suicide risk ( $r = .17^*$ ), but moderate for depression ( $r = .50^*$ ).

### 5 Conclusions

#### 5.1. Minority Stress Model, Meyer (2003)



#### 5.2. Limitations of the studies



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